

UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL
9 February 1986

Where is Mr. Ou?

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WASHINGTON

The espionage trial of former CIA analyst Larry Wu-Tai Chin ended quickly with his conviction on all charges of having been 'a communist Chinese mole' for more than 30 years.

But Chin's conviction Friday in U.S. District Court in Alexandria, Va., left unanswered some intriguing questions, particularly: What happened to one of his chief Chinese control officers?

A jury of nine women and three men found Chin guilty on 17 counts of espionage, conspiracy, tax evasion and failing to report foreign financial and gold transactions worth hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Chin faces up to two life terms in prison plus up to 87 years and more than \$3 million in fines.

During the four-day trial, the topic of the control officer was carefully screened in an apparent agreement between assistant U.S. Attorney Joseph Aronica and chief defense counsel Jacob Stein.

U.S. District Judge Robert Merhige apparently was privy to the arrangements not to reveal certain facts in the case to protect U.S. methods of collecting intelligence.

That delicate information concerned Ou Qiming, identified in court testimony as deputy chief, 1st Division, Second Bureau, Guangdong Provincial Security Bureau of Chinese Intelligence.

During pretrial hearings and the trial, it was brought out that Ou - pronounced 'oh' -- was Chin's primary contact with Chinese intelligence during clandestine meetings in Hong Kong.

But it became apparent during the trial that neither the prosecution nor the defense wanted to talk about Ou. Every mention of his name brought instant objections and whispered huddles at the judge's bench.

The prosecution did say that when FBI counterintelligence agents first interviewed Chin at his Virginia apartment Nov. 22, Chin confessed to his espionage and was 'astounded' the FBI knew in detail about his meetings in

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Hong Kong with Ou.

Testifying as the last witness in his defense, Chin said he first met Ou in 1955 when Chin was working in Okinawa for the CIA's Federal Broadcast Information Service.

"Mr. Ou was about 45, 5-feet-5, medium build," Chin said. "He did speak English but we spoke in Chinese."

Then Chin, under careful prosecution questioning, said, "The last time I saw him, it was in February of 1985."

Since there was no evidence Chin had traveled abroad in the last year, the implication was left that he had met Ou in the United States.

Neither the prosecution nor the defense pressed the point.

Thus, the question remains: Where is Ou?

From the court testimony and the deflection of all questions, it seemed possible that the Chinese intelligence agent may have defected and perhaps blown the whistle on Chin.

Mark Johnson, one of the three FBI counterintelligence agents who questioned Chin in November, testified during the trial that the former CIA analyst was surprised by the detailed information the FBI had on his meetings with Ou.

Johnson testified that when he related details of a meeting Chin had with Ou in Hong Kong, Chin -- previously "cool, calm and collected" -- became disturbed.

He quoted Chin as saying that only he and Ou could have known about such a meeting.

At that point, the testimony was interrupted by objections.

The implication left was that Ou had defected, is in the United States and cooperating with the CIA.

Neither the CIA nor the FBI would comment on that implication.